



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/700,504	11/05/2003	Tomio Mimura	244797US3XDIV	6275
22850	7590	01/16/2007	EXAMINER	
OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND, MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.			LAWRENCE JR, FRANK M	
1940 DUKE STREET			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			1724	
SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE	
3 MONTHS	01/16/2007		PAPER	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/700,504	MIMURA ET AL.	
	Examiner Frank M. Lawrence	Art Unit 1724	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 November 2006.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 5-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 5-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 29 November 2006 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. 10/168,975.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. The drawings were received on November 29, 2006. These drawings are approved.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 5-8, 10-12 and 16-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Riess et al. (2,805,734).

4. Riess et al. '734 teach a gas treatment apparatus comprising three gas/liquid contact stages, each including an upstream inlet end, a downstream outlet end, packing material (2), a spray nozzle (4, 8, 20) in the outlet end, a liquid reservoir in the inlet end, a demister in the outlet end, and a pump for transporting liquid from the reservoir to the nozzle in a preceding stage or the same stage (see figure, col. 2, lines 5-47). The apparatus is capable of performing carbon dioxide absorption or amine recovery if an aqueous amine is used as the liquid and the gas contains carbon dioxide.

5. Claims 5-7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16-18 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Bress et al. (3,798,021).

6. Bress et al. '021 teach a gas treatment tower comprising an absorption tower that includes a lower contacting section and two upper contacting sections that each include a lower inlet end, an upper outlet end, a scrubbing zone, a spray nozzle (78, 90) in the outlet end, a liquid reservoir

in the inlet end, and a pump for transporting contact liquid from the reservoir to the nozzle in the same section. Liquid overflowing the reservoirs flows into preceding contact stages (see figure 1, abstract). The apparatus is capable of performing carbon dioxide absorption or amine recovery if an aqueous amine is used as the liquid and the gas contains carbon dioxide.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. Claims 9, 13-15 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Riess et al. '734 in view of Bress et al. '021.

9. Riess et al. '734 disclose all of the limitations of the claims except that the apparatus is in a tower. Bress et al. '021 disclose a gas treatment tower as described in paragraph 6 above. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate the contact stages of Riess et al. '734 into a single tower in order to conserve lateral space.

Response to Arguments

10. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 5-20 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. The examiner agrees with applicant's argument that the previously cited prior art fails to clearly disclose liquid reservoirs at the inlet portions of each water washing section, although it is believed that the reservoirs may be inherent part of the bubble-cap trays that are depicted, and that overflow weirs or downcomers would be present to

transport liquid from the reservoirs to preceding stages in order to maintain a constant reservoir level.

11. Prior art rejections citing newly found prior art are presented to address the amended claims. The new patents do not disclose decarbonation processes but disclose devices that meet all of the recited structural limitations of the claims.

12. The outstanding indefiniteness rejection and objections to the drawings and specification have been overcome and are withdrawn.

Conclusion

13. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Frank M. Lawrence whose telephone number is 571-272-1161. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thurs 7:30-6:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Duane Smith can be reached on 571-272-1166. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Frank M. Lawrence
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1724

fl

Frank Lawrence

1-8-07